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By RT NARA Date 7-5-07

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OP IMMED

O 241835Z FEB 73
FROM LORD

TO HOOD

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY SWH0020

FEBRUARY 24, 1973
TO: HOOD
FROM: WINSTON LORD
BEGIN TEXT:
1. THE US SIDE HAS STUDIED THE CHINESE MESSAGE OF FEBRUARY 24, 1973 REGARDING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE US SIDE BELIEVES THAT THE CONFERENCE CAN CONFINE ITSELF TO THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT, BUT WISHES TO POINT OUT THAT CAMBODIA AND LAOS ARE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED IN ARTICLE 20B OF THE AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, ARTICLE 19 IN THE AGREEMENT SPECIFIES THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WILL "CONTRIBUTE TO AND GUARANTEE PEACE IN INDOCHINA." ACCORDINGLY, THE US SIDE BELIEVES THAT THE QUESTION OF LAOS AND CAMBODIA SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AFFIRMING ARTICLE 20B.
THE US SIDE AGREES THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLE OF UNANIMITY THROUGH CONSULTATION.
2. THE US SIDE HAS CONDUCTED A THROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE AIDE MEMOIRE OF THE CHINESE SIDE, DATED FEBRUARY 19, 1973. THERE IS NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SINKING OF TWO CHINESE VESSELS ON JUNE 20 AND THE SIGNALLING TO THE CHINESE TRANSPORT VESSEL RED FLAG, NO. 150 ON JULY 26 AND JULY 27. THERE WERE NO SIGNALS CONCERNING THE HOLDING OF OR THE DESIRE TO TRANSFER DISABLED CHINESE SEAMEN AND IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT WARNING SIGNALS MADE TO THE CHINESE MERCHANT SHIP BY US SHIPS WERE MISINTERPRETED. THE DETAILED DEFENSE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON THESE SIGNALS IS ATTACHED.
IT HAS ALSO BEEN REAFFIRMED THAT NO PERSONNEL WERE OBSERVED AT ANY TIME DURING THE SINKING OF THE TWO CRAFT SOUTHEAST OF CAC BA ISLAND ON JUNE 20, 1972. THE US SIDE REGRETS THAT IT HAS NO OTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TWELVE MISSING CHINESE FISHERMEN.

ATTACHMENT

DETAILED REPORT ON SURVEILLANCE OF CHINESE MERCHANT SHIP (NO. 150)
JULY 26 - 27, 1972

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *WHSR COMMENT * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

HAK,SCOWCROFT,LORD,HOWE

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A. AT 260700H JUL 72 USS SHELTON WAS DETACHED FROM TU 77.1.1 TO ESCORT CHINESE MERSHIP HUNG CHI 150 (HC-150) FROM VICINITY OF HON LA ANCHORAGE. AT 260705H SHELTON TOOK STATION 1,000 YARDS ON THE STARBOARD QUARTER OF HC-150 ON COURSE 350 SPEED 10 KTS. FROM 260711H UNTIL 261305H SHELTON MAINTAINED STATION ON HC-150'S STARBOARD QUARTER TO STARBOARD BEAM THROUGH VARIOUS NORTHERLY COURSE CHANGES. FROM 261230H TO 261237H SHELTON HOISTED MIKE YANKEE PENNANT TWO (HO 102, US EDITION 1969: IT IS DANGEROUS TO PROCEED ON PRESENT COURSE) SIGNAL FLAGS. AT 261234H SHELTON SENT MIKE YANKEE PENNANT TWO BY FLASHING LIGHT. AT 261238H SHELTON WARNED HC-150 IN ENGLISH, BY POWERED MEGAPHONE, THAT THE HARBORS OF NORTH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN MINED AND TO PROCEED FURTHER WAS AT THEIR OWN RISK. FROM 261238H TO 261251H SHELTON HOISTED NOVEMBER FOXTROT (HO 1021 YOU ARE RUNNING INTO DANGER). AT 261244H SHELTON SENT, IN ENGLISH, BY FLASHING LIGHT: HARBORS OF NORTH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN MINED, TO PROCEED FURTHER IS AT YOUR OWN RISK. AT 261250H HC-150 HOISTED MIKE YANKEE WHISKEY WHICH DOES NOT BREAK IN HO 102 OR HO 103. AT 261252H SHELTON HOISTED ROMEO VICTOR PENNANT THREE (HO 102: YOU SHOULD PROCEED TO SEA). FROM 251258H TO 261323H SHELTON HOISTED OSCAR WHISKEY PENNANT ONE (HO102: THERE IS A MINEFIELD ALONG THE COAST. YOU SHOULD NOT APPROACH TOO CLOSE). FROM 261232H TO 261332H SHELTON SENT THE FOLLOWING CW MESSAGE, IN ENGLISH, OVER DISTRESS FREQUENCY 500 KHZ: HARBORS OF NORTH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN MINED. TO PROCEED FURTHER IS AT YOUR OWN RISK. AT 261305 SHELTON COMMENCED OPENING HC-150 TO REMAIN 10NM FROM HON MATT ISLAND. THE MERSHIP PROCEEDED ON COURSE 315 SPEED 10 KTS TO THE HON NIEU ANCHORAGE AREA. AT 261332H ALL NOTIFICATION ATTEMPTS BY USS SHELTON WERE CONCLUDED.

B. AT 261532H JUL 72 USS HEPBURN (DE-1055) RELIEVED USS SHELTON (DD-790) AS SURVEILLANCE ESCORT FOR CHINESE MERSHIP HUNG CHI 150 AT POSITION 18-59N3 106-04E1. BASED EXCLUSIVELY ON RADAR CONTACT, HUNG CHI 150 WAS AT ANCHOR 1 MILE EAST OF HON NIEU ISLAND. AT 261929H JUL 72 USS HEPBURN WAS DETACHED FROM SURVEILLANCE DUTIES. AT 270850H JUL 72 CTU 77.0.4 (USS DEWEY) ASSIGNED USS HEPBURN TO CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE OF CHINESE MERSHIPS HUNG CHI 150 AND 162. AT 270932H USS HEPBURN ARRIVED ON STATION AT POSITION 19-04N4 106-05E2 2,500 YARDS TO STARBOARD OF MERSHIPS WHICH WERE ON A NORTHEAST HEADING AT SPEED 10 KTS. DURING INITIAL APPROACH USS HEPBURN CLOSED THE MERSHIPS TO A RANGE OF 1,100 YARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY. COMMENCING AT 270932H USS HEPBURN CALLED BOTH HUNG CHI 150 AND 162 BY FLASHING LIGHT FOR 30 MINUTES USING SIGNAL "ALFA ALFA" (HO 102 CALL FOR UNKNOWN STATION). NO REPLY WAS RECEIVED FROM EITHER MERSHIP. NO WARNINGS WERE ISSUED INASMUCH AS THE MERSHIPS WERE STANDING AWAY FROM THE COAST. NO OTHER SIGNALS WERE TRANSMITTED BY USS HEPBURN TO THE CHINESE MERSHIPS. AT 271425H USS LOCKWOOD (DE-1064) RELIEVED USS HEPBURN AT POSITION

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19-44N8 106-34E4.

C. USS SHELTON AND USS HEPBURN HAVE BOTH REPORTED NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHINESE FISHERMEN. THE FLASHING LIGHT SIGNALS FROM USS SHELTON AND USS HEPBURN TO THE CHINESE MERSHIPS COULDC HAVE BEEN MISINTERPRETED BY THE MERSHIPS. SPECIFICALLY, THE REPETITIOUS ALFA ALFA SIGNALS FROM HEPBURN COULD HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN FOR ALFA QUEBEC, WHICH BREAKS TO "I HAVE INJURED/SICK PERSON TO BE TAKEN OFF URGENTLY. I CANNOT ALIGHT BUT I CAN LIFT INJURED/SICK PERSON" (HO 102).

END TEXT

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